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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Saturday, March 21, 1936

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "NEWS NOTES FROM WASHINGTON." Items of interest to women, from the United States Department of Agriculture.

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Hello, homemakers. . . . Today's letter from our Washington correspondent is a honey questionnaire. Our correspondent asks the questions, and then very obligingly answers them. We may depend on the answers, she says, for they come from two food specialists in the Bureau of Home Economics -- Elizabeth Fuller Whiteman and Fanny Walker Yeatman -- who have just published the results of their honey research in a leaflet entitled: "Honey and Some of Its Uses."

But here are the questions and the answers:

First: "How many colonies of bees in the United States produce how many pounds of honey in a year?" The answer: "More than 4 1/2 million colonies of bees in the United States produce 160 to 215 million pounds of honey a year -- it is estimated," says our Washington reporter.

Second question: "According to United States Government color standards for honey, what are the seven color classifications?" The answer: "Water white, extra white, white, extra light amber, light amber, amber, and dark."

"Next: "What are the chief sources of honey in this country? . . . . Clovers and alfalfa. Other honeys with distinctive flavor come from the tupelo trees of the South, from orange blossoms, cotton blossoms, the wild sage of the California foothills, the star-thistle of the Pacific coast, buckwheat, mesquite, and fireweed."

Next question: "In what three principal forms is honey marketed in the United States? . . . . Extracted honey, section-comb, and bulk-comb. Extracted honey makes up about three-fourths of the crop."

And the next: "What is cut-comb honey? . . . . Cut-comb honey is a recent variation of section-comb. The comb is cut into sections, the honey is allowed to drain from the cut cells, then the comb is either wrapped in paper or put into paper cartons."

Now we come to a question I'm often asked by homemakers who have a supply of honey and want to store it properly. How should it be stored? Here's the answer, from the food specialists in the Bureau of Home Economics, by way of our Washington correspondent: "Unless in a tightly sealed container, honey should be stored in a dry place; otherwise it is likely to absorb moisture and ferment,

as will any other sugar sirup. Honey may be kept almost indefinitely, if tightly covered, at ordinary room temperature with a low humidity." (Ordinary room temperature, as you probably know, is about 70 degrees Fahrenheit.) Continuing with the facts about keeping honey: "If sealed, honey may be kept in a refrigerator, although low temperature may cause the honey to become cloudy or partially crystallized. With a few exceptions, all honeys crystallize on aging."

That leads logically to the next question: "How can you liquefy honey that has become crystallized?" The answer: "Warm the container in moderately hot water, not above 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Higher temperatures injure both the flavor and the color."

I'd better repeat that temperature -- to liquefy honey, warm the container in moderately hot water, not above 140 degrees Fahrenheit.

And now -- "What do you know about the food value of honey?" asks our correspondent, and goes right on to explain that like all other sweets, honey is an energy-producing food. Its chemical composition varies considerably, but on an average about three-fourths of honey is sugar. Does honey contain minerals? It does -- small quantities of such minerals as iron, calcium, and phosphorus.

Next question: "Is honey a source of vitamins?" Well, nutrition specialists in the Bureau of Home Economics studied samples of white clover honey and buckwheat honey, from different parts of the country, and they found "no detectable vitamin value."

Next: "Is honey easily assimilated?" The answer: "It is. Because honey is composed so largely of simple sugars it can be assimilated by the body with ease. If eaten in moderate quantities, it provides a very wholesome addition to the list of sweets, and may be used as a modifier of milk for infants."

And now, friends, we come to the end of the "Honey Primer," and our correspondent suggests that homemakers in need of new ways to use honey write to the United States Department of Agriculture for the leaflet, "Honey and Some of Its Uses." In it you will find ways of using uncooked honey, and recipes for cooking with honey. The recipes include meringues, confections, cakes and quick breads, with suggestions for using honey in jellies, jams, and conserves. There is no charge for the leaflet. If you want a copy, send your name and address to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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